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SUBJECT: VIETNAM: AMBASSADOR MEETS VICE FOREIGN MINISTER  
DZUNG TO DISCUSS APEC EXPORT CONTROL CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 145437

1. (SBU) The Ambassador met Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vice Minister Vu Dzong August 9 to deliver Reftel A points about the October 3-6 Export Control Conference in Hanoi. Vice Minister Dzong expressed his full understanding of the importance of continuing to hold this conference, but said Vietnam remains under pressure from China to exclude Taiwan and Hong Kong. He requested that the United States approach China for further discussions and to find a compromise such as inviting Hong Kong and Taiwan in "some lesser capacity." The Ambassador responded that to exclude Taiwan and Hong Kong or to have them participate as less than full members would be unacceptable as it would set a precedent for China to exclude APEC economies from future events.

2. (SBU) VFM Dzong asked for more time to work on the issue. The Ambassador stressed that time is short, emphasizing that we need an answer by the close of business tomorrow (August 10). The Ambassador told VFM Dzong absent a positive decision by Vietnam to move ahead with the logistical arrangements and the issuance of invitations, Washington will take steps to move the conference to another venue. In response, Vice Minister Dzong said that he "understands the message" but is "caught in a difficult" situation. He promised to redouble his efforts to schedule a meeting with the Chinese Ambassador to settle this issue before providing us a final answer.

3. (SBU) Comment. Thanks to this discussion and a meeting yesterday with Office of the Government Vice Chairman Nguyen Quoc Huy (septel), the Vietnamese are painfully aware just how important this issue is. At this point, it is too close to call on whether the Vietnamese will take our advice to call Beijing's bluff by mailing out the invitations. End Comment.

MARINE